Scenes of Clerical Life

—Evelyn Waugh

THE

Commonweal

Modern Jacobin

THE RISE OF POUJADE

by John Caxton

Prospects in 1956

THE FARM VOTE

by Sidney Baldwin

Geoffrey Ashe Edwin Kennebeck Thomas E. Kennelly

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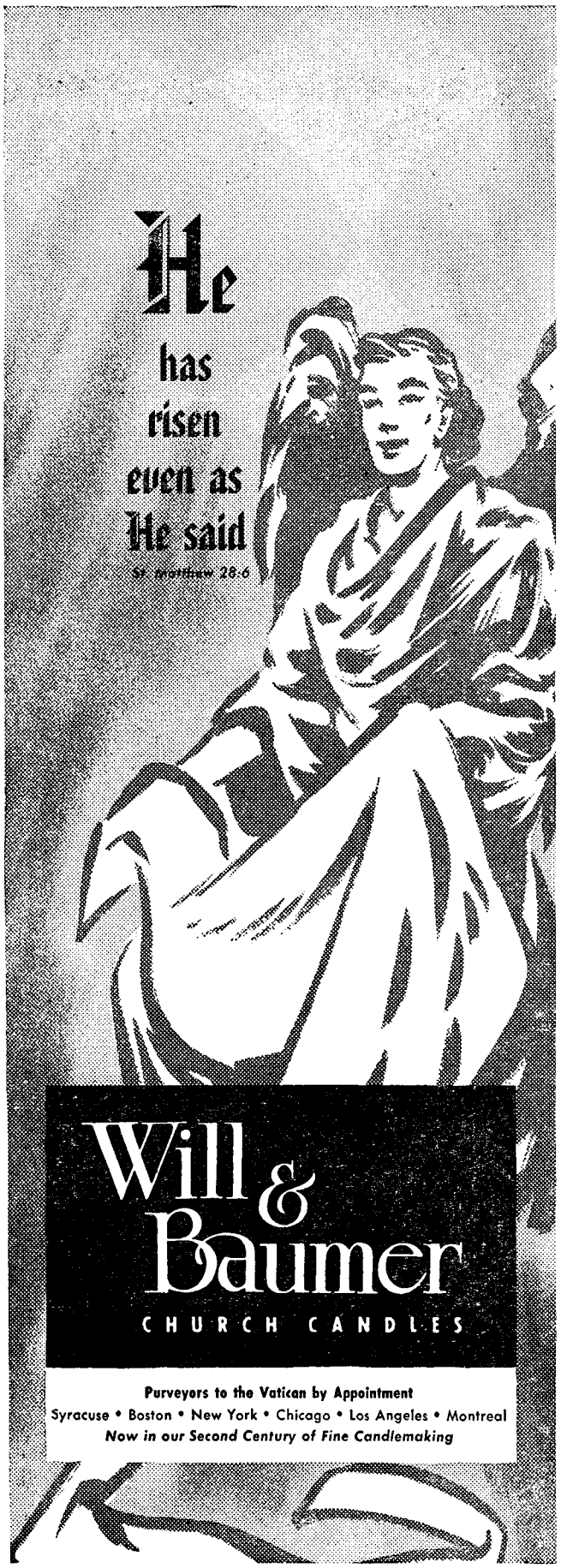

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The Commonweal

week by week

STALIN, THE MYTH

THE ATTACKS made on Stalinism during the recent Congress of the Soviet Communist Party impressed most observers because they were so harsh and astringent. But these attacks fade into gentleness when they are compared to the scathing denunciation of Stalin which Party Secretary Nikita Khrushchev is reported to have made at a closed session of the Congress. The emotional tone of his address is established by one report which said that during his speech, which lasted over three hours, several of his audience fell into fits and convulsions and that Mr. Khrushchev himself broke into tears four times.

The reports of Mr. Khrushchev's criticism emphasize that it was wide-ranging and incisive. He criticized the activities Stalin engaged in from the thirties until his death, and he denounced Stalin's judgment in military, economic, social and personal matters. He charged, it is reported, that Stalin was personally responsible for the 1937-38 purge of the Red Army which left the Soviet military demoralized and unprepared for war; that Stalin had such blind faith in the Nazi-Soviet pact that, despite warning, he refused to believe Hitler would attack and actually ordered some Russian units not to resist the "false" attack; that Stalin was a blunderer who doubted the Soviet's ability to withstand Germany and a coward who fled Moscow while Marshal Zhukov and others defended it; that Stalin lived his declining days as a megalomaniac who placed in daily jeopardy the lives of the present leaders of the Soviet. "We never knew when we entered Stalin's presence whether we would come out alive."

After the text was read to the privileged inner group, Party workers went out to explain to Soviet citizens the meaning of the attack. Differing reactions were reported within Russia itself. Some citizens immediately asked that Stalin's name be erased from memorials, that his pictures and statues be taken down, and that his body be removed from the mausoleum where it has been placed next to that of Lenin. But in Georgia, Stalin's home province, people rebelled against the report and in outlying areas it was denounced as false. In Murmansk, for instance, a member of Komsomol, a youth organization, laughed at the report and attributed it to Western propaganda. "Stalin and Lenin, they are two of the same. When you say Lenin you can also say Stalin."

The Communist Party papers in Europe published reports which softened and confused the criticism, sometimes printing at one time reports of Mr. Khrushchev's denunciation, accusations against the West's false charges, and subdued praise of Stalin. The London *Daily Worker* had received and printed letters denouncing the anti-Stalin trend when reports of the bitter Khrushchev speech reached England. A similar situation exists within the United States. Although William Z. Foster, the United States Communist leader, has openly acknowledged the difficulties all Communists face, the *Daily Worker* here denies that the denigration of Stalin—this denigration which has already caused such disturbance in Russia and Europe—has caused a crisis among the Communists in the United States.

BOTH Stalin's long brutal reign and Mr. Khrushchev's present denunciation of it reveal the possibilities of the totalitarian mind, which is able to operate in defiance of reason, logic, and common sense. Its readiness to act as it does makes it difficult for the West to foresee the effects of Mr. Khrushchev's speech. The dangers of speculation are well illustrated by a recent article in which an informed observer, on the basis of the Twentieth Congress, postulated a divided mind within the party and a rivalry between Deputy Premier Mikoyan and Mr. Khrushchev, both based on Mr. Khrushchev's supposed support of a pro-Stalinist faction.

But, recognizing the dangers involved, the West can take advantage of the deep disruption that will be apparent in many groups. Many Communists,

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and certainly the younger groups, have been brought up on Stalinism. They have been fed the pap of Stalin's infallibility. In the myth to which they have given faith and trust, Stalin has been the one unchanging symbol. Now the symbol has been destroyed, and the charges of the West proved true. Firm Stalinists will not accept their disillusion gladly, and the mental gymnastics required to attain the new Communist vision may well be too strenuous for many of them.

It will be the task of Western leaders to mark the disruption as strongly as possible and to call the Russian leaders to account as they strive to reconstruct the past. Stalin may well have fled Moscow to save his life, but his present accusers collaborated in his crimes in order to save theirs. Religious persecution has a long history under Stalin, but it has not yet been halted under the new leaders.

The new leaders of Russia must feel fairly secure to launch the attack they did on Stalin; but they are capable of making errors. If they have underestimated the difficulty in destroying a myth so long in the making, we should be prepared to take advantage of it.

RESISTANCE TO INTEGRATION

THE NEGROES in the South are manifesting an admirable restraint in their efforts to secure the school integration which is now their legal due. According to the impressive state-by-state survey drawn up by the New York *Times*, the individual Negro is most concerned about overcoming his legal disabilities; he feels he is entitled to first-class or full-fledged citizenship. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is also exercising moderation by pressing for court decisions on failure to integrate only in those states deliberately thwarting or delaying action.

Opposition to the change decreed by the United States Supreme Court nearly two years ago is of two sorts. The hundred Southern members of Congress who signed the recent statement supply an outstanding example of those who would oppose compliance with the Court's decision by every legal means. Senator Ellender of Louisiana, one of this group and one of the most vehement in his opposition to desegration of Southern schools, is emphatic in condemning recourse to "violence, lawlessness, hatred and bloodshed."

Other elements in the determined opposition, that has so far thwarted any school integration at all in eight Southern states and resulted in only the barest gestures in three more, favor direct action. Intimidation is their stock in trade. The way rifles and ammunition have been bought up by individual citizens in certain Southern states is truly appalling. The "White Citizens Councils" which have sprung up in a number of localities supply a contrast with the non-violent, largely legal activities of other anti-integration groups.

The fact that all this poses a major problem for the Democratic Party in a Presidential year is a comparatively minor aspect of the situation. The big question is what is to be done about their basic rights for millions of Americans. Are there feasible ways of steadily pressing for such rights without provoking a widespread resentment because this involves "a dictated change" in the Southern way of life?

Men have been known to yield with good grace to changes that they have long and vehemently opposed, but this is a rare achievement. Yet the inviolable rights of the human person comprise a principle on which the United States must ever press forward; no matter what the opposition, we cannot countenance deprivation of human rights, especially within our own borders.

The task is to avoid the sort of pressure that itself creates new opposition or stiffens old. It is a question, for instance, whether school integration is an appropriate topic for fiery campaign oratory for candidates of either party. Moreover, the individual citizen who takes the law into his own hands should always incur the severest penalties. Where college and local authorities thwart admission of Negro students, test cases should be made. The law of the land is on the side of justice here and therefore unfrenzied legal steps should take clear precedence over agitation as the chief means of arriving at the goal.

NEXT WEEK

RUSSELL BARTA writes, in the annual Education Issue, about the adult education program recently launched by the Archdiocese of Chicago.

"The adult is a special kind of student. His uniqueness is that he has gathered innumerable experiences. This distinguishes him from the average young student who attends our regular educational institutions. The adult is a man of experience. These experiences have to do with love; with family life; with working life; with community life; with problems of his own personality. The adult is interested in who he is. He is faced with the problem of having his experience represent a frustrating hodge-podge of disconnected spheres of activity or add up to some meaningful whole."

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PLAN FOR "MASTER FACULTIES"

ONE OF the most pressing of the many problems now confronting higher education in America is that of providing enough good teachers to serve the needs of the next fifteen years, when the present record-breaking enrollment of three million college students will gradually be doubled. There is little likelihood that the nation can find, by 1970, the four hundred thousand qualified professors needed to teach effectively the six million college students who will be enrolled by that date.

Mr. Alvin Eurich, director of the Fund for the Advancement of Education, has suggested that the part of wisdom is to "drop the cliché of small classes," and assemble faculties of "master teachers," able to reach the greatest possible numbers of students by means of large classes, recorded or televised lectures and whole teaching sessions put on film. The work of the master faculty would be supplemented by ordinarily qualified teachers, who, in turn, would be assisted in the educational "detail work" by student assistants. Since a poor teacher in a small class is still communicating mediocrity, and an excellent teacher can still impart a high quality of instruction to hundreds, we hope this partial solution will be at least studied by those scores of educators for whom reading the story of Mark Hopkins on the log seems to have been a traumatic experience.

THREAT TO WESTERN UNITY

THE LEADERS of the Big Three cannot be accused of fiddling while the fires burn higher in North Africa and the Middle East; the trouble is that each nation, France, England and the U.S., has been too busy readying its own fire engine to notice that the spreading blaze may soon engulf them all. Where the situation has cried out for a strong, coordinated policy, Washington, Paris and London have responded with individual policies which, all too often, have worked against one another and thereby served to weaken the West.

Graphic illustrations of the resulting interalliance tensions can be found in the sacking of the U.S. Consulate in Tunis by a French mob, the heated British protests when the U.S. Ambassador expressed his "sympathy" to Greece over the British banishment of Archbishop Makarios from Cyprus, and the publicly expressed misgivings of both Foreign Minister Pineau of France and President Gronchi of Italy that the U.S. was providing rather faltering leadership in the cold war.

Part of the problem of effecting a strong coordinated policy among the Big Three is the fact that each is, understandably, anxious to protect its own interests and therefore to apply its own solution to what it regards as its own problem. Hence the Middle East Problem confronting the Big Three is carved up into three smaller problems on the basis of national self-interest: the American problem of protecting oil investments in Saudi Arabia, the British problem of protecting oil interests in Iraq, and the French problem of protecting plantations in North Africa.

As an immediate consequence of this three-headed approach to a problem common to all, the lines of communication among the allies become frayed and mutual confidence weakened. Thus, in the case of the U.S. shipment of tanks to Saudi Arabia, the banishment of Archbishop Makarios by the British and the sequence of French improvisations in North Africa, the allies have learned of each other's moves only through the newspapers. Similarly, the left hand of the alliance did not know what the right was doing until it was done in the case of Prime Minister Eden's suggestion last fall that Israel cede part of the Negev and give Egypt and Jordan a common frontier, or when the U.S. recently decided to sell its cotton surplus abroad at bargain prices, even though such a move would obviously arouse Egyptian resentment, not only toward the U.S., but toward the whole Western Alliance.

Despite the divided and divisive solutions being tried by the Big Three, all is quiet along the Potomac—and the Thames—and the Seine. No meeting of Big Three foreign ministers has been suggested; no truly coordinated approach to common problems is being discussed at other than the "normal" diplomatic levels.

In normal times, such normal interchanges would probably be sufficient; in any event, it would be unrealistic to expect close conformity and coordination where problems touched the sensitive nerves of national self-interest. But the plain fact is that these times are not normal, that the West has already lost several important skirmishes in the cold war, and that a joint strategy seems called for to blunt the new Soviet offensives in Africa and Asia. Unusual dangers call for unusual measures and, it may be, for unusual sacrifices; but the West has no other choice.

THE PRICE OF DEFEAT

AFTER twenty lean years out of power, the Republican Party assembled for its 1952 nominating convention split by factional rivalry, with

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various dissident groups threatening to sit on their hands if their man was not nominated. The GOP was divided right down its political middle, with old-line isolationist forces roughly assembled behind Senator Taft and the Eastern internationalist forces lined up behind the Dewey-Eisenhower leadership. To most observers, it seemed unlikely that the diverse groups in the GOP could work together well enough to elect a candidate, and, in the unlikely event that they did win success at the polls, it seemed impossible that a government headed by a representative of the internationalist wing could do business with a Congress dominated by senior members of the Taft group.

But the old adage that nothing succeeds like success seems true in politics as well as in other fields. Certainly, success has worked wonders for the Republican Party. The differences between the Taft group and the Eastern group are still there, as Senator Knowland demonstrated by his recent pointed suggestion that Taft men should occupy more places of power in the Administration. But by and large the Republicans have stopped airing their differences in public, and some Republican hopefuls are even saying that four more years in power will transform the GOP from the minority to the majority party.

The Democrats, on the other hand, seemed to wait only until they were defeated to fall apart. The basic division in Democratic ranks has always been there, of course, between the "Northern liberals" and the "Southern conservatives," but a facade of some kind of unity was maintained as long as the Party controlled the White House. With that unifying factor gone, the Democratic Party began to look very much like the pre-1952 Republican Party—a patchwork quilt of opposing loyalties and contradictory interests.

Consider, for example, the plight of Northern liberal Democrats at the moment. Party leadership is nominally in the hands of Adlai Stevenson, the standard-bearer in the last election. But the party record is being made in Congress, and there the same quiet coalition of conservative Southern Democrats and old-line Republicans is calling the tune as usual. Northern Democrats would like to campaign hard on what is called the Eisenhower "give-away" program, but what can they say about Democratic leaders Rayburn and Johnson? Both are die-hard supporters of the gas-and-oil depletion allowances, and both pushed the natural gas bill, which was anathema to liberals in both parties. Mr. Eisenhower's subsequent veto of the measure only emphasized the fact that the Democrats themselves have thrown away or seriously weakened one of their potentially strong campaign issues. Or take the farm vote. In his campaigning, Adlai Stevenson has been stressing the need for a return to fixed price-supports as an emergency measure. This is good enough, but farmers can hardly miss the fact that the Administration battle for flexible supports was won only with substantial Democratic support. Similarly with the issue of civil rights, which the Democratic Party has long stressed and which will be a key issue in the coming election. Northern Democrats can talk all they want, but even if they can get around Senator Eastland, the roster of Democratic names on the recent Southern Manifesto may well mean defeat next fall for Democratic candidates in the big cities outside of the South.

Such are the travails of the Democratic Party at the moment. Perhaps they only illustrate what has long been a fact: U.S. political parties are largely non-ideological amalgamations which often embrace groups with quite contradictory interests; under stress, these differences, rather than the similarities, are most likely to appear. In any case, whatever may be the reasons, the Democrats are learning the hard way what the Republicans knew for twenty years: the lot of the party out of power is not an easy one.

ELECTORAL AMENDMENT?

WILL OUR democratic processes function more equitably if we shift to a more precise method of counting heads? That is one way of putting the issue raised by the current proposal to "modernize" the Electoral College. One of its objects is to enable Presidential candidates to emerge from less populous states. And there is much to be said in times like these for withdrawing any hindrance from every possible candidate of any real stature. But is this an important enough objective to justify a shift from the traditional Presidential election by states to election by direct popular vote?

The present state-by-state "winner-take-all" system would be supplanted—at least in some states —by a dividing up of each state's electoral votes between the two candidates in proportion to the votes he receives. In that way all individual votes would be of equal value. A Presidential candidate, often by TV and radio, would seek to enlist the required number of disparate individual supporters; he would tend to think less and less in terms of the state and regional interests that have had to be a major concern of aspiring candidates all along. This would represent not gain for the nation but loss.

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The Rise of Poujade

"THERE WOULD BE NO ANNIHILATION CAMPS IN A POUJADIST FRANCE, BUT QUITE A FEW POLITICIANS WOULD BE HANGED"

JOHN CAXTON

TO CALL the French Republic "that slut" used to be a point of honor with the Right. One was a Royalist, if one could manage the imaginative effort, or a Corporatist, or a Fascist, or simply a Nationalist, or, finally, a supporter of the *Etat Français*. What one was *not* was a Republican; what one did not accept, what one sneered at on all occasions, was the heritage of the Great Revolution. Laval, to be sure, was something of an exception, but then he was never a leader of the Right, only a leader whom the Right, with deep distaste, found it necessary to accept in certain circumstances—an inverted Churchill, one might say.

The originality of the Poujade movement is not that it accepts the Republic; the moderate Right, at the behest of the Vatican, has long done so, at least to the extent of contesting elections, not without hoping for better things. The originality of this movement is that it uses, successfully, the language of the Republic, and specifically of the Great Revolution. M. Poujade calls for the convening of States-General; his collaborator, M. Chevallet, asserts that in modern France "high finance" corresponds to the nobles of the *Ancien Régime,* while the Civil Service corresponds to the clergy (the Higher Civil Service corresponding to the Hierarchy), the rest of the nation being the Third Estate which has been nothing and must become everything.

In Algeria, appropriately, the Revolution is at a more advanced stage: M. Poujade's friends there have constituted themselves a Committee of Public Safety. In Paris, M. Poujade's paper *Fraternité Française* uses language that would have shocked Charles Maurras: "The Republic in Danger!" "The Republic, One and Indivisible!" "Up the Republic!" Yet, if he could overcome his natural disgust at such expressions, he would find the sentiments of *Fraternité Française* congenial enough: imperialism, xenophobia, the cult of the Army and the dead, and anti-Semitism —not the anti-Semitism of the Nazis, but the milder native variety.

The Left, from *L'Express* to *L'Humanité,* has a very simple explanation for this kind of thing; reactionary capitalists are using the language of republicanism and patriotism to further their counter-revolutionary ends. There seems, at the present stage, to be little evidence to support this theory: Poujade's movement seems to have more popular support—2,600,000 votes—than it has money. His paper is a weekly sheet, poorly produced and written, and carrying no advertising.

The most important part of the bourgeois press—conservative *Figaro* and liberal *Le Monde*—condemns him. It is true of course, that if it comes to a choice between Poujade and the Communists, the leaders of French industry would prefer Poujade; but it is he, and not necessarily they, who want it to come to such a choice.

M. POUJADE'S Republicanism, moreover, is not necessarily as suspect as the Left likes to maintain. A movement based on the resentments of artisans and small shopkeepers, a movement which enlists the latent violence of these resentments to shake the foundations of the state, has as good a right as any other to place itself, for good or ill, within the tradition of the Great French Revolution. The excited patriotism of M. Poujade and his friends is much more in the native Jacobin tradition than is the Russophile pacifism of the modern Left. Poujadism is certainly a movement of the Right, in modern terms, but it is also an authentic heir of Jacobinism.

The great weakness of the old *Action Française* as a would-be mass movement was that, by definition, only a small minority could feel themselves to be the heirs of the rulers of the *Ancien Régime*. M. Poujade has chosen a deeper and more navigable tradition;

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no finicking distinctions between "France" and "the Republic," the *"pays légal"* and the *"pays réel,"* but for him the French Republic, one and indivisible, of which Algeria is an integral part. It is a strong line and all the stronger because he and his Franco-Algerian wife—an increasingly important personality in the movement—show every sign of believing in it.

Their belief is their great strength, because the people who follow them believe, or want to believe, some rather difficult things: that France is still a great power, that Algeria can be held for France while at the same time taxation is reduced, and that all the small shopkeepers of France can make a profit while the prosperity of France increases. The sort of language these people do *not* want to hear is this, used in the conservative financial journal *L'Economie* recently: "The greatest fault of our governors . . . . is to perpetuate illusions about our real resources, military, economic or monetary . . . . Metropolitan France has gone to the extreme limits of the possible in the military defense of North Africa; there is very little hope, either, of her being able to increase her investments in that territory, which needs investment so much." How much more palatable than these cold words of M. Henri Peyret is the language of Pierre Poujade: "International finance has decreed the disappearance of France from among the great nations . . . . But if you, the people, will it so, the kill will have to be postponed, the jackals will disperse, and traitors prepare to face the judgment of the people."

The emphasis of M. Poujade is on free will and against historical determinism. "History" seems to decree the bankruptcy of countless provincial shopkeepers, the expulsion or massacre of a million white Algerian settlers. But what if shopkeepers and settlers were to say "no" to "history"? It is not likely that M. Poujade has read Gide—although, being thoroughly French, he has an uneasy respect for culture—but if he did he would be struck by the image of that Prometheus doomed to be forever prey to the Vulture, who one morning simply wrung the Vulture's neck.

That is how he sees himself, and that is the significance of the unlucky title of his book, "I Chose Combat," which the Left insincerely, but effectively, construes as a deliberate imitation of *Mein Kampf*. The cry of "Poujadolphe" has power, in France, to hurt. It is perhaps not very profitable to debate how far it is deserved; to this observer, Huey Long or Perón seems a more useful object of comparison as to temperament and character. There would be no annihilation camps in a Poujadist France, but quite a few politicians would be hanged.

Is a Poujadist France a possibility? A growing number of Frenchmen seem to think so, although in Paris and among educated people the idea is still generally treated as incredible. Paradoxically, it may be those who realize the danger most, and have best reason to fear it, who are doing most to bring it nearer. If the Communists bring about the Anti-Fascist Union which they demand and which the progress of events in Algeria may force upon the Left, then the need for an anti-Communist Union may be felt on the Right. And no other Right-wing leader has the mass-appeal which the neo-Jacobin Poujade has shown himself to possess. Some well-informed people say that the French Army is seventy per cent for Poujade. Indeed, it would not be surprising if many French officers, after Dienbienphu, came to share the opinions on democracy of the late German generals von Seeckt and Schleicher. If so, their man also is at hand.

CHANGING PICTURE

The Farm Vote

SIDNEY BALDWIN

FOR THE second time in a generation, the farm problem claims the attention of the American people. And, as is natural in an election year, more and more people are preoccupied with the great political question mark: who will get "the farm vote" in 1956?

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There are straws in the wind—the election in 1954 of Democratic Congressmen, Governors, and state and local officials in rural Republican strongholds, Democratic victory in three of the five Senate contests in the politically pivotal corn-hog area of the Midwest, public opinion polls that reveal growing discontent among farmers with the present national Administration's agricultural programs, and creation of a new

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and more militant farm organization in the Middle West. Some fearful Republicans and gleeful Democrats are already assuming that the outcome of the coming elections may turn on what the farmers do in 1956. But is there really such a thing as "the farm vote" and, if so, what role does it play?

For several decades, as the United States has shifted from a rural to an urban country, the farmers and rural people have become an ever smaller numerical minority. There are, for example, approximately twenty-two and one-half million farm people today, representing about thirteen and one-half per cent of the total national population—a decline of approximately three million since 1950. The minority status of farmers is reflected in the growing political importance of urban voters in the cities, in the growing strength of large industrialized states in the national conventions of both Democratic and Republican parties, in the allocation of electoral votes in Presidential elections, and in the broader control of Congress and some of the state legislatures.

The raw statistics of agriculture are not in themselves conclusive, however, for political power cannot be measured simply by counting noses. The decline in farm population should not be taken as an automatic indicator of a decline in the political significance of farmers in 1956. Agrarian institutions, interests, ideas, and ideals extend beyond the farm into the communities and regions where farming may not be the major occupation. Businessmen, lawyers, and doctors, for example, who are dependent upon the purchasing power, economic welfare, or good will of rural people, will reflect the attitudes of their clientele. Similarly, many city people who were born and reared on farms still respond politically like their country cousins. The agrarianism of our past has woven itself deeply into our national fabric so that the welfare of the farmers becomes something of a national preoccupation. These facts tend to get concealed in national population and voting statistics.

Much of our failure to perceive the patterns of political behavior among farmers and rural people is due to the very use of stereotypes, such as "the farmer," "the farm vote," or "the farm bloc." Steeped in our traditional Jeffersonian agrarianism, we find it difficult to free ourselves of the myth that farmers are a distinct class of people, the "chosen of God," and the source from which all national virtue, wisdom, and strength flow. There is, of course, a unity among rural people, but our devotion to the farmer myth tends to blind us to the fact that farmers are not an indistinguishable mass.

There are important differences, distinctions, and inequalities within agriculture that are too frequently submerged in the common view of farmers arrayed against the rest of society. Commercialized farming, with its concentration of land, its emphasis on efficiency, its greater dependence on credit, technology, and hired labor; industrialization and urbanization of society; and the growth in size and complexity of our population and economy have had important political

implications. Agriculture has experienced the same forces of specialization, centralization, and concentration that have affected business, labor, and government. But the political folklore of America tends to prevent the recognition of these differences.

FARMERS are not homogenized. They are differentiated by a wide range of circumstances, and the determinants of their political behavior vary sharply as conditions vary within and between the states. Size and value of farm, tenure status, family income and level of living, education, kind of crops, degree of political awareness and participation, and level of community involvement are some of the factors which differentially condition the voting behavior of farm people. The sharecropper on seventy-five acres of cottonland in Georgia, who earns less than $2,000 a year, belongs to no farm organization or community association, has a sixth-grade education, and is politically apathetic or disenfranchised, bears little resemblance to a farmer on his own fifteen hundred acres of wheatland in Kansas, who earns $10,000 annually, actively participates in the Farm Bureau or the Farmers' Union, has a high school or college education, and is experienced in using his vote effectively in elections.

Different interests and needs produce different, and often contrary, demands and behaviors. The New England poultry farmer or dairyman will probably not respond politically like the Midwestern grain farmer from whom he buys his feed. The dairyman in New York State will differ from his competitor in Wisconsin, and the political behavior of the corn farmer will probably differ from the behavior of the farmer who raises the hogs that eat the corn.

The solidarity which once marked "the farm bloc" has largely dissolved. Neither farmers, their organizations, nor their representatives in government are in agreement on the issues facing the country in 1956:

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foreign trade, tariffs, rural electrification, farm credit, conservation, price supports, and the role of government in agriculture generally. Today "the farm vote" is less definite and tangible than ever before. The urbanization and industrialization of American society, with its great population mobility, mass media of communication, and other nationalizing forces that break down local and sectional differences, have robbed the farmers of much of the uniqueness and distinct identity that was theirs in a simpler society. These changes are reflected in the differences between two of the major farm organizations in the United States.

The Farm Bureau Federation, most powerful of them all, represents the more prosperous farmers, located primarily in the corn-hog-wheat Midwest and cotton South. Politically conservative, this organization often takes policy positions that correspond with those of business organizations. On the other hand, the National Farmers' Union, often considered the heir to traditional agrarian radicalism in the United States, is an organization dedicated to the interests of smaller farm operators centered in Colorado, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin. Less strategically entrenched and politically powerful than the Farm Bureau Federation, the National Farmers' Union has been identified with many of the New Deal efforts to reform American agriculture; in sharp contrast to the more conservative Farm Bureau, it has emphasized the credit needs of marginal farmers, the need for rigid supports, the social costs of commercialized farming, and the need for greater governmental assistance to farmers generally.

The more efficient farmers, effectively organized and led, have long shown more political skill than the others. But those at the bottom of the ladder remain important politically when their discontent is great. If social issues and problems are identified, articulated, and dramatized in the coming campaign, the political appeals of 1956 will probably mirror the real differences and distinctions between farmers.

In the past, America's major parties were based on combinations of sectional interests. Southern farmers, for example, were moored to the Democratic party, while those of the Midwest were anchored to the party of Lincoln. Republican strength was centered in the corn belt, the hay and pasture regions, and the corn-hog-wheat areas, while that of the Democrats was based on the cotton belt, part of the corn-winter-wheat belt, and the citrus fruit areas of the South and Southwest. During the past few decades, however, evidence of a realignment has accumulated. As the shift has progressed from agrarian politics based on sectional interests to class politics, in which the party cleavage tends to correspond to class lines, farmers have demonstrated a growing independence and have tended to switch party allegiance more readily than in the days before 1932 when party labels prevailed, regardless of personalities, issues, and problems.

Farmers are being criticized for "selling their votes to the highest bidder," but what has really been happening is that the farmers are becoming more perceptive. Their votes may no longer be taken for granted by either party. As one dairy farmer in upstate New York said recently, "Maybe we've been betting on the wrong horse these many years." Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman successfully challenged the attachment of many farmers to the Republican party, and in 1952 Dwight Eisenhower challenged the traditional Democratic loyalties of many farmers.

Symptomatic of the emerging realignment is the growing community of interest between large-scale farmers and leaders of business, reflected, for example, in the collaboration between the Farm Bureau, the Chamber of Commerce, and other business organizations. Similarly, a community of interest has developed between middle- and low-income farmers, organized labor, and urban groups. Collaboration between the CIO-AFL and the National Farmers' Union, and between some of the Southern "farm bloc" members of Congress and those from the urban North in Congress this year is illustrative.

THE MOST frequently cited clue to "the farm vote" in 1956 has been the decline in prices of farm products, and the evidence does sustain the belief that farmers, like the rest of us, do vote partly according to their pocketbooks. But we must remember that politics cannot be reduced to the bread-and-butter factors. Farmers, like others, vote not on the basis of occupational category or economic status alone, but rather in response to a complicated web of forces which vary from one part of the country to another. Personalities, issues of religion and nationality, differences in the level of party competition, national voting trends, party tradition, local circumstances, and many other factors enter into the picture.

It is true that alienation of the corn-hog farmers of the Midwest, the wheat growers of the Northern Plains, or the cattlemen of the far West could well spell the difference between victory and defeat in certain Congressional, state, and local campaigns, or in a close Presidential contest. From the national point of view, however, predictions about what farmers will do in 1956 should be tempered by understanding of the complex determinants of political behavior and the long-standing forces which explain much of our nation's political history. The so-called "farm vote" may be tending in the direction of one party or the other, but, as recent political history makes clear, it is not yet in anyone's bag.

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THE STAGE

DEMOCRATIC VISTAS

THE IMMEDIATE dilemma posed by Mr. Paddy Chayefsky's play "The Middle of the Night" is the difficulty of reconciling its negligible indifference—one might almost say outright poverty—as drama, with the pungent charm of the same writer's "Marty." From the latter work, I remember a certain urban lyricism, and a kind of individual poetry of the grotesque: the piece is perhaps, ultimately, an emotional phantasy raised to a level of distinction not common in our popular arts. "The Middle of the Night" yields no such gentle pleasures. It is a play of harsh and angular surfaces, all of which are stained with the synthetic dyes of television: boxy little scenes are enclosed with scrim curtains, furiously unraveled, which announce with pregnant apprehension: 'The Manufacturer's Apartment—Tuesday—10:30 A.M.' (*Why?*) And mood music of a penetrating and seductive banality—*ecco!* Mantovani—floods the texture of the play's most intimate sorrows.

To his small and anxious morality of the loved and unloved, Mr. Chayefsky applies again that lacquer of "realistic" observation which is his celebrated trademark. (He achieves, surely, some dubious uniqueness in requiring his heroine to play a charged emotional scene against the smothering background of a television commercial for Rheingold beer.) Yet the so-careful annotation of surface seemed to me this time curiously perfunctory and drab—an impression not softened by Mr. Joshua Logan's prosily emphatic staging of the work. One senses here, too, the difficulty first noted by Mr. Gerald Weales in his excellent analysis of Chayefsky in a recent issue of *Commentary*—that of 'placing' these figures of the playwright's imagination in their correct sociological context. (Mr. Chayefsky, stressing the latter so visibly, must expect to be judged by its standards.) To illustrate: the atmosphere of "The Middle of the Night," ostensibly Jewish, bears but a very slight impress of racial personality or tradition—*it might be interchangeable with* the ambiences of the dramatist's other studies of Irish-American or Italian-American situations. Mr. Chayefsky, courting a spurious 'universality,' has snared the truth neither of the parish nor of the world.

Yet, ultimately, what we cherish in the work of the imagination—what we respond to in any writer—is the particular sense of life, and only on that level can the full consequence of Mr. Chayefsky's position be grasped. He is the historian of a certain moment in the American moral sensibility; with his tactile perception of the skin of life, he expresses our egalitarian imaginative sympathies, our impulses of tenderness and liberality towards all those sifted by the indifferent winds of time and circumstance. Out of this state of mind might come an art of great humanism, but how frightened and bleak is the moral posture of Mr. Chayefsky's work! how small the dilation of spirit within its rigid stance! Sympathy, pity: perhaps they are not enough, neither for art nor for life. The world may be well lost for love, or anything else, but the world must first be admitted and *known*—"so various, so beautiful, so new." It is difficult to believe that these dead souls, rattling in the husks of the body, have ever been visited by possibility, variety, grandeur; and Mr. Chayefsky, unlike Chekhov, denies their grey pathos the resonance of stature by acquiescing in the very vision which haunts and paralyzes them.

Mr. Edward G. Robinson, I should say, gives a direct and touching performance in "The Middle of the Night," modulated with great tact and delicacy, though the part taps nothing like his full resources. (*At the ANTA Playhouse.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

GREMLIN IN THE ICEBOX

SO FASCINATING are the details worked out by the British Naval Intelligence in executing Operation Mincemeat in "The Man Who Never Was" that I thought the picture was finished when the man's corpse was launched off the coast of Spain and the Germans were supposedly deceived into believing that the Allies would invade Europe through Greece. But greater thrills were yet to come—because the Germans were thorough too, and sent an Irish spy to England to check up on this dead William Martin in whose briefcase were letters about the invasion. Since I haven't read Ewen Montagu's factual book on which Nigel Balchin based his lively script, I don't know how closely the movie sticks to the actual events, but I must say that as a movie "The Man Who Never Was" is a winner that will hold your attention from beginning to end. Ronald Neame has directed Clifton Webb, as Lt. Commander Ewen Montagu, Robert Fleming, as his assistant in British Naval Intelligence, and Andre Morell, Laurence Naismith, Geoffrey Keen and many others in this large and good cast portraying British and German Brass, pathologists and various other people involved on both sides of this elaborate hoax, in an under-played documentary manner so that everything seems more factual than fictional. Only two women figure in the strange deception: Josephine Griffin, as Montagu's secretary, and Gloria Grahame, as her apartment-mate in love with an Air

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Force pilot. While these roles seem relatively unimportant during most of the film, they suddenly zoom into real prominence when the Germans send their agent (Stephen Boyd) to investigate the authenticity of the William Martin in whose pocket was found a letter from Gloria with her picture. Will Gloria, who knows nothing of the tricky plot, spoil the whole thing? "The Man Who Never Was" is crammed full of suspense, but perhaps the most spine-tingling episodes are those connected with Montagu's search for a corpse ("Every body belongs to somebody"), especially that of someone who had died of pneumonia. And then comes the gruesome business of dressing the body, giving it the personal effects that will really make it "Major Martin" and keeping it fresh in a steel container so that it will appear recently drowned to the Spaniards and Germans. It is to the credit of producer Andre Hakim and everyone else connected with "The Man Who Never Was" that this picture is the best cloak-and-dagger film since "Five Fingers."

EVER since M-G-M came out with their charming and highly successful "Meet Me in St. Louis," I've wondered why they didn't come again and "Meet Me" in some other towns. Well, now they have; they want to "Meet Me in Las Vegas." While this new picture has its amusing moments, most of it is, like its locale, crowded with gamblers, tourists and entertainers over-anxious to entertain and be entertained. Its simple story, about a gambling rancher (Dan Dailey) and a ballerina (Cyd Charisse) who fall in, out of, and back in love, is choked with songs, gags and production numbers, some of which are quite handsome and some as tasteless as Las Vegas itself. Dan does a delightful duet with a little Japanese girl, Mitsuka Sawamura; Cyd and others get "classy" in a modern-dress version of the "Sleeping Beauty Ballet" created and staged by Eugene Loring, and later they get "hep" in a snappy "Frankie and Johnny Ballet" while Sammy Davis, Jr. sings Sammy Cahn's updated lyrics; and there are further numbers with Lena Horne, Frankie Laine, Jerry Colonna, Cara Williams and others. There's a surfeit of everything, just to be sure everyone gets his money's worth. Even the cute trick of having movie stars, like Debbie Reynolds, Frank Sinatra, Tony Martin, et al. wander quickly in and out of the film is carried on endlessly. Perhaps the plethora of attractions is meant to keep you from noticing that none of them is first-rate. This is not another "St. Louis," and if I have anything to say about it you won't meet *me* in Las Vegas.

IT'S PRACTICALLY impossible to believe that such a good movie as "Touch and Go" could be made out of almost nothing. But the English have a flair for this sort of thing: "Touch and Go" is about nothing—except life itself. When Jack Hawkins quits his job in a huff, he and his wife (Margaret Johnston) decide to emigrate to Australia with their daughter. They discuss and discuss. They put their house up for sale. Jack dickers with their good neighbor (Roland Culver) about the sale of their old car. Their charming young daughter (June Thorburn) starts out with their aged cat (Heathcliff) in a basket to give him to a friend. The cat gets himself into a precarious position and has to be rescued by a passer-by; and this young man (John Fraser) and the daughter begin to fall in love. And during the next few weeks, while papa's temper flares, and mama efficiently goes about packing, and the cat and car continue to prove a great bother, the girl and boy calmly go on and on with their romance and finally decide to get married. By this time it is quite clear that this family, will never really get to Australia. But it isn't the plot one cares about; it's these lovely people, written about in the screenplay by William Rose and portrayed by an excellent cast under Michael Truman's direction. After its first few scenes, "Touch and Go" has you in its spell, and its enchantment does not even end with the film's finale.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

OF NOTE

CHARITY AND THE CHRISTIAN

THE FEBRUARY 15 issue of *Informations Catholiques Internationales* (163 Boulevard Malesherbes, Paris 17, France) quotes a recent pastoral letter by Cardinal Saliège of Toulouse dealing with the "new duties" of the Christian. Excerpts from this letter follow:

Many people believe that atheistic Communism is the wave of the future. I say that they believe this; they do not really know. Does not the social evolution which is needed admit of other solutions? Supposing that atheistic Communism should come to pass. How long will it last? The further one goes, the swifter are the developments or revolutions which he encounters. The sap of the French Revolution is today almost entirely spent. Will the Communist sap last for even a century? The Christian sap will endure forever. The elements of economic truth contained in Communism will continue, but its dogmatic and metaphysical components will collapse—and likewise its mechanistic conception of the universe.

[While all this is transpiring] new duties are im-

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posed upon Catholics. The great precept is to love one's neighbor. This precept has given birth to many forms of assistance which, even though secularized at present, are of Christian origin. To give alms can be useful to one's neighbor. But today true love of one's neighbor involves suppressing the cause of his misery. . . . Every Catholic should war against alcoholism, white slavery and unemployment, and for the attainment of liberty by all peoples. Colonization was justifiable in the past only if its object was to lead the colonies to self-government, to bring them from the stage of childhood to that of an adult. To work together with these peoples is not to dominate them. It is to associate with them for common ends. . . .

We live at a time when individual aid proves more and more inadequate. Institutions are necessary. Institutions depend on power, and the civil power in turn depends upon elections. The Christian, long, too long, on the defensive, must take up the cause of the unfortunate, the underpaid, the poorly lodged, the undernourished, not only in France but in all countries. He fulfills this duty through propaganda, the press and the ballot. Otherwise he fails in his duties as a citizen and as a Christian.

COMMUNICATIONS

THE POWELL AMENDMENT

Champaign, Ill.

TO the Editors: I feel compelled to write regarding an editorial which appeared in the March 9th issue of The Commonweal concerning Representative Adam Clayton Powell's proposed "rider" to any bill designed to extend Federal funds for school construction.

The editors seem to feel that although the Powell Amendment is well-intentioned it is nevertheless ill-timed. This is so primarily because a portion of the bloc of Southern Democrats in the Senate is prepared to wage a pitched battle of words to ensure defeat of such a bill. (This would mean that none of the very badly needed Federal aid could be made use of.) Indeed, the existence of the Powell Amendment would serve to stiffen the "resistance of segregationist legislators." At this point a quotation of Thomas Jefferson is brought forth presumably to demonstrate that persuasion, perseverance, and patience, being the best advocates on questions depending on the will of others, might advance the cause of integration in this instance more effectively than would Mr. Powell's ill-timed amendment.

However, when the problem is looked at in another light somewhat different factors come into focus. If the white citizens of this country, both North and South, are ever to accept the fact that they can no longer refuse to acknowledge that their 17.9 million Negro brethren are full-fledged citizens and integral members of society, they must be willing to alter the practice of merely paying lip service to the theory of racial equality. . . .

Specifically, on an issue as profound in magnitude as Federal aid to education we can not slip out of our theoretical set of values and don our practical ones and conveniently ignore the real issue by saying that we must be content to patiently persevere in persuading our Southern gentlemen to wake-up to reality and admit that the romantic visions of 1860 are slightly dimmed.

The real issue is that it would be hypocritical for a government which supported the Supreme Court decision banning the segregated school system of the South to contradict itself by now helping to perpetuate that system with Federal funds. It is extremely unfortunate that many states have neglected their school systems to such an alarming extent that Federal assistance is critically needed. But the fact that one serious problem is involved does not give our legislators license to ignore another equally serious problem, one upon which they have demonstrated a willingness to more than compromise in the past.

Furthermore, it is extremely doubtful that the Powell Amendment would really serve to stiffen the resistance of segregationist legislators. As many people who have had experience in tackling various aspects of the segregation issue in the South will agree, those who are foremost in opposition to racial integration make their greatest headway in the face of compromise on the part of those who would challenge them. When the racist comes into conflict with someone who has the courage of his convictions he will often yield because he knows that racial separation is morally indefensible.

GERRY BRANDMEYER.

"THE FAILURE OF AN ELITE"

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: Mr. Benvenisti contends ["The Failure of an Elite," Jan. 27] that the study of classical languages is useless, does not teach "how to think," and that it does not matter when the "humanities are crowded in a corner." This view may be defensible; I do not think it is. But it certainly cannot be defended by the argument presented by Mr. Benvenisti. For there is no relationship between the failure of the English government to cope effectively with an economic situation and the absence of intellectual inadequacy in Americans. Mr. Benvenisti, apparently, believes that education alone determines a man's in-

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tellectual and practical efficiency. He ignores the fact that education operates on a pre-given material. As there are ages in history in which, for reasons which we hardly understand, there arises an unusually large number of artists, poets, philosophers, and so on, so there are ages in which there is a notable lack of talent, let alone genius. And it happens, unfortunately, that this dearth of talent coincides with times which demand precisely men capable of coping with great and novel problems. One cannot simply accuse education for this state of affairs.

Nor is the fact of intellectual adequacy, in spite of a non-classical and non-humanistic education, a proof for Mr. Benvenisti's thesis. Intellectual adequacy is, by far, too indefinite a term. It requires qualification to mean anything at all. And who knows how much more adequate the intellect of these men might have been, if they had studied the classics?

"The failure of the elite" does not prove that the ancient tongues do not develop the power of thinking; it proves only that the men who failed did not profit from the instruction they received. The same is true, of course, of mathematics and science. There is sufficient evidence for the sometimes truly amazing inability of scientists to understand the problems of politics or history. Further, is it not the same education which Mr. Benvenisti castigates and holds to be worthless which trained the men whose judgment he claims the "elite" ought to have heeded?

RUDOLF ALLERS.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Berkeley, Cal.

TO the Editors: It was with considerable surprise that I read in your recent editorial on capital punishment [March 2] the statement that "The death penalty . . . appears to be an anachronism whereby society simply takes revenge for a crime." I shall not quarrel with your calling the death penalty an anachronism, nor would I debate its questioned efficacy or prudence. But I would take issue with your summary dismissal of one of the proper ends of punishment.

The objects of punishment are three, not two. In addition to those commonly cited aims—correction and prevention—we should consider retribution. It, too, is a legitimate end of punishment, a necessary corollary of justice. A well-held principle of religion is that good shall be rewarded and evil punished surely the everlasting fires of hell do not burn simply to encourage sanctity. . . .

Let us for a moment hypothesize a crime so unique that it does not admit of repetition, by the same or any other person. Once committed, there is no need for prevention nor, in general, for correction. What then? Shall there be no punishment? Justice has been affronted; wrong has been done; let it have its merits.

Capital punishment may or may not serve as a deterrent; it may or may not be prudent with regard to possible error in conviction. But to object that it is simply revenge is to overlook the purposes of punishment.

RICHARD C. PILGER, JR.

NATURAL GAS BILL

Okmulgee, Okla.

TO the Editors: Your editorial remarks on the Natural Gas Bill in the March 2 issue seemed out of character. Generally you seemed to realize most issues are pretty complicated. I would say the crux of the argument is whether we are to give oil interests a 27½ per cent tax allowance to develop the country's natural resources, control their operations through state conservation laws to prevent their wasting these natural resources, and then treat them as a utility. It seems to me the depletion allowance is meant to encourage gambling. The Natural Gas Law would certainly discourage it. Let's not have one law going up and one down.

R. M. TWITCHELL.

"'CATHOLIC PLOT' DOWN UNDER"

Pittsburgh, Pa.

TO the Editors: Like Mr. Lyle Blair [March 9], presumably a fellow Australian, I too read Wilfrid Sheed's article, "'Catholic Plot' Down Under," and marveled at its accuracy and perception. Therefore Mr. Blair's carping criticism of it surprised me, to put it mildly; just as Sheed's rejoinder in the same issue satisfied me as an adequate dismissal of Mr. Blair. I come freshly from the scene of battle and although I have had no part in any of the business which has torn the Australian Labor Party apart, I do live in Melbourne, and meet and talk with some of the principals from time to time. As a non-Catholic, I am not in a position to say just how definitive Mr. Sheed is when it comes to the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the recent upheavals; but I was struck with the lucidity of his article and especially with his drawing attention of Australia's continuing schizophrenia on the matter of East Asia.

NEVILLE R. WILLS.

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Scenes of Clerical Life

EVELYN WAUGH

IN THE nine years since the publication of *The Prince of Darkness,* Mr. Powers has met the Enemies of Promise face to face and has cut them dead. His first book identified him as a young man of delicate and original talent. The list of acknowledgments which prefaces *The Presence of Grace** proclaims that there is now an eager market for his work among the popular magazines. Many less scrupulous artists have allowed themselves to be reduced into unnatural fertility by early success. Mr. Powers' second collection comprises nine stories, a total output of only one a year, and each displays the same exquisite craftsmanship as its predecessors. Moreover, Mr. Powers has been subject to other temptations. He has been to Europe. But no taint from that insidious continent mars the innocence of the Middle West. Mr. Powers' heart and mind are still devoted to his original, rich soil. He is still preoccupied with the presbytery. Of these new stories six deal directly with clerical life; a seventh has for its climax the entertainment of a parish priest to dinner; an eighth, the most brilliant, describes the adventures of an ecclesiastical salesman; one only, the most gruesome, is concerned with purely lay affairs.

This is a very difficult book for an Englishman to review because it records a world as remote, and as fascinating, as medieval China. American murderers, American lovers, American millionaires, all have recognizable counterparts in England. American parish priests—those, at least, whom Mr. Powers delights to portray; I have met many of totally different character —are an unknown people to us. Mr. Powers convinces us that they exist, with their gadgets, television and ball games, their incurious orthodoxy, their parish suppers and bingo, their whole-hearted devotion to parish and diocese, their lack of courtesy and of esthetic appreciation, their peculiar ascendancy in their communities, their isolation from an educated laity. Mr. Powers reveals a world which alternately edifies and scandalizes an English Catholic. But there is a further difficulty for the alien reader, Mr. Powers' diction. He writes a light, free, colloquial language which is often not only unfamiliar but unintelligible, not only in dialogue but in direct narrative when he speaks in *propria persona.* I cannot help regretting this tendency, more marked it seems to me in his recent than in his earlier work. He restricts his scope as do the Irish poets who patriotically write in Gaelic. There are more people in America than in England but there are fewer book-buyers—buyers, that is to say, of the kind of book Mr. Powers writes. Moreover there are hundreds of thousands in Asia and Africa who enjoy literary English but will be baffled by Mr. Powers' *argot.* I am sure he could write more plainly without sacrificing any of his essential artistic achievement.

THE outstanding stories in this book are "The Devil was the Joker" and "Blue Island"; the former a richly comic transposition of what might be a theme of Mark Twain's into a world on the extreme edge of the supernatural area, a delicate investigation of every aspect of a delicious situation. The second is a grim story of suburban life, an anxious, rather shady young couple in a new district, trying and failing to get on with their neighbors. The incident is something that could not conceivably happen outside America, nor I suspect outside a very small area there, but Mr. Powers leads the alien into this society, confidently establishes him there and shows him everything. "A Losing Game" is much less ambitious, but wholly successful within its limits; a gem comparable with the brightest of 'Saki.' I am not quite so happy about "Death of a Favorite" and "Defection of a Favorite." Here the tales are related in the first person by the presbytery cat. It is a form which has been tried by other writers more successfully. It postulates an element of fantasy which Mr. Powers lacks. It is not enough to portray the personality of a sharp child and endow it with a few extraneous attributes of brute creation. (Incidentally, I think Mr. Powers greatly exaggerates feline sense of smell.) The essence of the observing and recording animal should be false conclusion, the irony established by the reader's knowledge of what the humans are really up to and the cat's erroneous explanations based upon cats' motives. Anatole France, I seem to remember, did this brilliantly with a dog. Mr. Powers' cat can read, he knows altogether too much about humans

*THE PRESENCE OF GRACE. By J.F. Powers. Doubleday. $2.95.

Mr. Waugh's most recent novel is *Officers and Gentlemen.*

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in their relation to one another. Moreover, the behavior of the clergy in "Death of a Favorite" strikes me as a lapse in credibility and therefore in taste. "Dawn" is an admirable play on the word "personalize."

Presumably "The Presence of Grace" is the story Mr. Powers most values, since he has given its name to the volume. It goes deeper into the sacerdotal function, bringing the cure of souls into proper perspective among the more mundane activities of the parish priest. It left me in some little doubt about the precise significance of the pastor's simple negation, but I think this is the field where Mr. Powers' highest talent lies. He has the essential equipment of the artist, a firm philosophic position, a body of unique raw material of endless potentiality, a splendid skill in self-expression. He has shown himself impervious to the chief ills of his profession. I see no limit to his possible achievement.

Primer of Democratic Politics

PROFILES IN COURAGE. By Senator John F. Kennedy. Harper. $3.50.

By PHILIP SCHARPER

FROM the history of the Senate the junior Senator from Massachusetts has chosen eight legislators who displayed conspicuous political courage by championing a course of action which they knew to be unpopular, but which they also thought was right. In selecting his exemplars of political integrity, Senator Kennedy ranges in time from John Quincy Adams to Robert A. Taft, and his gallery includes the famous—Webster, Calhoun, George Norris—and the forgotten—Edmond Ross, whose single vote prevented the impeachment of President Johnson and thereby put the office of the Chief Executive beyond the reach of legislative mob-rule.

The author, however, has not intended this book as an interesting foray into history. Didactic in purpose and inspirational in tone, it is basically an exercise in what might almost be called civic hagiography, and, like most hagiography, it is unabashedly aimed at the reader, suggesting that he go and do likewise, "for the same basic choice of courage or compliance continually faces us all, whether we fear the anger of constituents, friends, a board of directors or our union, whenever we stand against the flow of opinion on strongly contested issues."

Fitting these "profiles in courage" into a didactic frame could have exposed Senator Kennedy to the besetting temptation of the hagiographer—that of simplifying or suppressing awkward facts. Fortunately, he does neither; in addition to recording their moments of greatness, he also measures the clay feet of his heroes—the venality of Webster, the vaulting ambition of Sam Houston, the crude vituperations of George Norris. As a result, all of Senator Kennedy's elect "smell of mortality" and their display of political courage becomes at once more credible and more impressive.

Stylistically, the book is less fortunate. The author tries to impart to the reader a sense of participation in the events he describes, a flavor of "you were there" in the Senate gallery watching these "decisive moments in the lives of great Americans." Hence the book is maneuvered into the technique, not of presenting, but of reenacting history—a method which most professional historians wisely choose to avoid.

Again, as do most purveyors of "inspiration," Senator Kennedy tries to squeeze the last drop of "drama" from his vignettes of political integrity; as a result, his presentation is often forced and overblown. Instead of letting each incident speak for itself, he insists on speaking for it, and keeps plucking the reader's sleeve, whispering, "Do you get the point?" or "Isn't this inspiring?"

As a consequence, the book frequently staggers under the burden of edification which the author has heaped upon it.

It may well be, therefore, that the book is of value primarily as a primer of politics in a democracy. It provides abundant illustration, as does the whole of American history, that compromise, mutual concession to gain a common end, is as Henry Clay observed, "the cement of the Union." The big questions for the elected legislator in a democracy, as Senator Kennedy points out, is simply how to compromise, and with whom. Attempting to answer these questions constitutes the challenge to both the political insight and the political integrity of the legislator. The electorate, for its part, cannot reasonably expect infallible insight from its elected representatives; five of the eight figures dealt with in this book were probably wrong in the decision for which they pawned their political futures. Nor can the electorate legitimately demand extraordinary political courage of its representatives, any more than a congregation, let us say, has a right to demand that its pastor display the heroic virtue of a saint. The electorate, as well as the elected, is often faced with the necessity of adjusting ideals to reality. Further, an elected official in a democracy stands at the center of many pressures and counter-pressures, exerted upon him by his party, his region, his constituents and his own ambitions.

In the end, the remarkable fact, perhaps, is not that there have been so comparatively few examples of the extraordinary political courage which Senator Kennedy records here; the remarkable fact is that there have been so many. Reading their story may lead the reader to profitable political reflection in an election year.

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Modern Saga of Investigation

A SECRET UNDERSTANDING. By Merle Miller. Viking. $3.

By GEOFFREY ASHE

MR. MILLER'S spy story raises some interesting points. A famous aviator is captured in Korea. He broadcasts Communist propaganda, returns to the U.S. after the armistice, talks vaguely about righting a great wrong, and vanishes. The editor of a news magazine gives Ward Matthews, one of his staff writers, the formidable assignment of discovering what has happened to the ex-hero. Matthews tells the story. It is quite complicated and quite exciting. The assignment is completed halfway, but a group of enemy agents remains to be exposed and thwarted, a task carried out by Matthews at immense personal risk. He works mainly by hunches and has no help from the F.B.I.

In the course of his adventure, Matthews comes in contact with members of several sinister organizations. There is the president of a society formed during World War II, ostensibly with the aim of killing all Germans. There is a man whom he recognizes as a Nazi official encountered in Europe while working for OSS. There are Communists. But the curious thing is that he keeps on striking the same people in different contexts. Sometimes there is evidence of a shift in allegiance, but sometimes not. Matthews knows, of course, that the great contending powers of the world are always planting spies in each other's camps. But he begins to sense a cryptic and fundamental unity underlying the apparently warring systems. Who is really fighting whom? Perhaps all totalitarianism is the same conspiracy. (The speculation that the conspiracy may have a foothold in capitalistic democracy also—beyond the presence of a few traitors—is not admitted.)

The moral atmosphere of *A Secret Understanding,* as a modern American saga of investigation, is noteworthy. It conveys the feeling of a norm. In the older detective stories this feeling always existed: the Bad Guys were exceptional. Then came the era of the Spillane-type thriller in which everybody—the investigator included—was violent, unscrupulous, and sordid. Matthews is none of these, nor does he move in a universe of degenerate hoodlums and yielding blondes. He is a domesticated soul, happily married to an admirable wife, with three children. His employer and his friends are more or less decent characters whom he likes and respects. The investigation uncovers some notable instances of goodness and courage as well as evil.

That is one side of the picture: on the other hand, it is necessary to mention that Matthews tries some pretty contemptible tricks, and goes through some pretty disreputable antics, in order to get his scoop and confirm his suspicions. Naturally the road he travels is tortuous and surprising. There is a serio-comic pursuit reminiscent of Graham Greene, in which Matthews staves off capture by delivering a prolix lecture on azaleas to a ladies' gardening club. There are some entertaining grotesque characters, happily more grotesque than the plot requires. The grotesquerie gets a little out of hand; the author brings on the denouement by a stroke of luck too marvelous to believe. Perhaps, after all, Dickens is really the right novelist to compare him to.

Dickens usually gives his characters comfortable endings. Matthews' eventual destiny is foreshadowed throughout, and forms no part of the plot—hence a reviewer can fairly mention it. He quits the magazine to go in for full-time investigation of subversive activities, losing financially by the change and exposing his family to a good deal of discomfort. The admirable wife is enthusiastic; the children's views are not stated. We are left with the picture of a noble vocation finally discovered, and recognized as abundantly worth the sacrifice. Somehow this is a depressing conclusion. Mr. Miller is no McCarthyite . . . or whatever the thing is called now. I even suspect him of being a Democrat.

Nevertheless, morally speaking, the end is the key to the whole story. Matthews is an Upright Honest American. He maintains a nice home, cultivates azaleas and the domestic virtues, and lives on a far healthier plane than the monstrosities who people the Spillane undergrowth. At the same time the threat to this very way of life imposes an obligation to stick at nothing in its defense. He can lie and cheat and go to jail and break out, he can leave his job in order to do such things all the time instead of only some of the time, and he is not only justifiable but heroic. Of course, considering the dangers incurred, he actually is heroic. The conception, however, remains a little disturbing.

Of New India

SOME INNER FURY. By Kamala Markandaya. John Day. $3.50.

By EDWIN KENNEBECK

KAMALA MARKANDAYA is the author of *Nectar in a Sieve,* a beautiful and implacable story of impoverished people in India, and she has written her second novel with the sure, graceful economy of the first. It is the story of an upper-class Hindu girl and an Englishman who fall in love and then are caught up in an incident of murderous violence set off by an Indian nationalist group to which the girl's foster-brother belongs.

Miss Markandaya's characters are typical without being types. Similarly, some of her scenes can "represent" East versus West, or personal affection versus national feeling, without blurring the colors they have on their own terms. Her style, basically bare and simple, now and then flowers quite naturally into a small arabesque of description or even of "philosophizing." And she can have her narrator describe a social problem with careful irony:

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"So they waited, watchful even while they played, brown, wily urchins with warped bodies of perpetual hunger and the bright uncomplaining eyes of children who somehow contrive to ignore it. . . . [Premala] suggested the children be fed.

"This is a suggestion so troublesome it is seldom made: for if they are fed today, what of tomorrow and the next day? Then there is ever after. And if these few today, how many tomorrow? A hundred? Legion? There is no end. These questions, being unanswerable, are not asked. But sometimes this code, by which all respectable people abide, is broken by people of innocence or troublemakers; and when this happens, everyone is rendered savage, because all those regions of willful paralysis, decently covered and forgotten before, now lie quivering and smarting in the open."

Of the three overlapping patterns in her novel—the girl's life with her family, her love affair with the young British official, and the story of the anti-British demonstration—the first seems to have had Miss Markandaya's most loving care. With her admirable ability to write adroitly with feeling, she draws a warm picture of the girl's family—the practical and compassionate mother; the father, a stern man of complete integrity; the brother, just back from England and comfortably at home in two worlds; the intense and single-minded foster brother; and the lovely young girl herself. They are beautifully rendered in their environment—a genteel, well-to-do Hindu household. ("The house itself was equipped to cope with both Europeans and Indians; there were two dining rooms, two kitchens, even two sets of servants, the one lot knowing Indian cookery and service, the other . . . knowing how to deal with such abominations as meat and capable of waiting at table.")

Manners, traditions, the landscape and the very furniture, and a small group of sensitive, intelligent people, so deftly and affectionately created as separate living souls—they form harmonies and tensions enough for a story. But midway in the novel Miss Markandaya's heroine is persuaded to leave her home to live and work as a journalist in a large city. She breaks from her parents in the most abrupt and seemingly unfeeling manner. In the growing story of organized nationalist rebellion, the domestic manners and provincial flavor are superseded by political opinions and physical danger. The personal intensity of the novel's first part recurs only in some passages about the girl's affair with the Englishman. Alas for these lives that the new India should have to invade and shatter them so cruelly. Alas too, that, in telling of it, the novel—though it continues readable, professional, even moving, virtues we now expect from Miss Markandaya — should lose much of that flavor.

The Private Man

MY BROTHER ADLAI. By Elizabeth Stevenson Ives and Hildegarde Dolson. William Morrow. $4.

By THOMAS E. KENNELLY

IN THE self-conscious reminiscences of a doting sister about the private life of a successful brother lies the stuff of comedy. The solemn parading before strangers of cherished forebears and family intimacies, unrelieved by even one horse thief in the shadows, creates a trapped feeling similar to that produced by an otherwise charming hostess who insists that you enjoy the Sunday faces in her family album. The feeling persists in spite of knowledge that the hostess is Mrs. Ives, the Sunday portraits are of Adlai Stevenson, and the family more distinguished than most in its record of public service.

In this book the Stevensons of Bloomington, Illinois, a moderately wealthy family, live their gracious lives well protected from the economic and social upheavals that characterized much of American life at the turn of the century. Their son Adlai's boyhood was unremarkable in the sense the boyhood of figures in biographies of the *Life with Father* genre are unremarkable. That is to say, he was kind to animals — especially stray cats — engaged in rainy afternoon theatricals with his sister, tinkered with the family car, toured Europe with his mother and governess, camped out overnight, and resorted to fisticuffs sufficiently to prove he was no sissy.

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This of course was not all. There were the distinguished relatives and guests appearing and disappearing. There was Grandfather Adlai Stevenson, who had been Vice-President under Mr. Cleveland, and the shade of Great-grandfather Jesse Fell who had persuaded Lincoln to write a three-page autobiography. There was also the excitement of living in Springfield when Adlai's father was appointed to fill an unexpired two-year term as Secretary of State of Illinois. And later there was prep school in the East, World War I and several months service as an apprentice seaman in the Navy, followed by undergraduate work at Princeton, and Harvard Law School.

It is impossible to remain unresponsive to Mrs. Ives' guileless charm as she shows her pictures one after the other. Here is Adlai in his second year at Choate calling the roll on the bleachers: "You see me make everyone come to the games and if they don't, they get sat on." At the Folies-Bergere: "imagine my astonishment to see *Father* walk in!" Climbing the Matterhorn: "It was a great experience and I enjoyed it immensely." And this is Adlai on girls: "She is the daughter of a professor and a corking good dancer." What can one say to all this!

Uneasily one's thoughts wander to another Princetonian, Adlai's senior by several years, to the world of F. Scott Fitzgerald. Not a pretty world in comparison, but a genuine one. Daisy with her voice full of money was not counterfeit, nor were any of her sad young men. Perhaps it is unfair to expect the same inner consistency from life that one demands from fiction: nevertheless, it is disappointing not to find in this book something more than a superficial analysis, something which would give some clue to the riddle of the mature Stevenson. The folksy approach to biography, no matter how lovingly conceived, is apt to make the subject look ridiculous. That it has not happened here is due largely to Adlai Stevenson himself, for his public service stands as a living refutation of platitude and cant.

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Correction

The "Critics' Choices" in the issue of February 24 gave an erroneous price for *Liturgical Piety* by Pere Louis Bouyer, published by the University of Notre Dame Press. The correct price is $4.75.

REVIEWERS

Geoffrey Ashe writes on literary and political matters for English and American journals.

Edwin Kennebeck is on the staff of a New York publishing firm.

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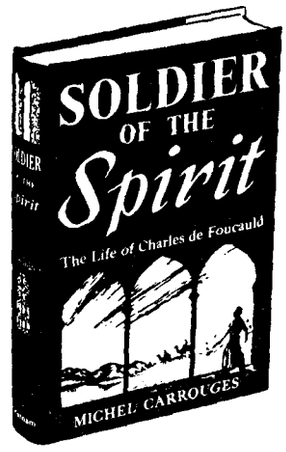

SOLDIER OF THE SPIRIT

The Life of Charles de Foucauld
1858-1916

By MICHEL CARROUGES

Translated from the French by MARIE-CHRISTINE HELLIN, with an introduction by ANNE FREMANTLE

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